DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 443 599 PS 028 789

TITLE	Preparing Our Students for the 21st Century: Key Areas in Education.
INSTITUTION	Partnership for Family Involvement in Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	1999-00-00
NOTE	17p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	After School Programs; *Change Strategies; Community Involvement; Educational Facilities Improvement; Educational History; *Educational Improvement; Educational Trends; Elementary Secondary Education; Family Involvement; Futures (of Society); School Business Relationship; School Safety; Teacher Recruitment
IDENTIFIERS	America Goes Back to School

ABSTRACT

Family, business, and community involvement in education can make a significant difference in preparing our children to succeed in an increasingly global job market. This pamphlet outlines six priority educational action areas on which schools/communities can focus America Goes Back to School events or long-term projects. The six areas outlined are: (1) Making schools safe and drug free; (2) Recruiting and preparing quality teachers; (3) Modernizing schools; (4) Expanding after-school programs; (5) Getting high standards into every classroom; and (6) Increasing pathways to college and careers. For each of these areas, the pamphlet provides a rationale, related facts, model programs, America Goes Back to School ideas, and a list of resources. The pamphlet concludes with the article "A New Millennium: Reflecting on Educational Change and Opportunity," which discusses historical events that still affect education today and current events that will shape the future of education. (HTH)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 443 599

Preparing Our Students for the 21st Century:

Key Areas in Education

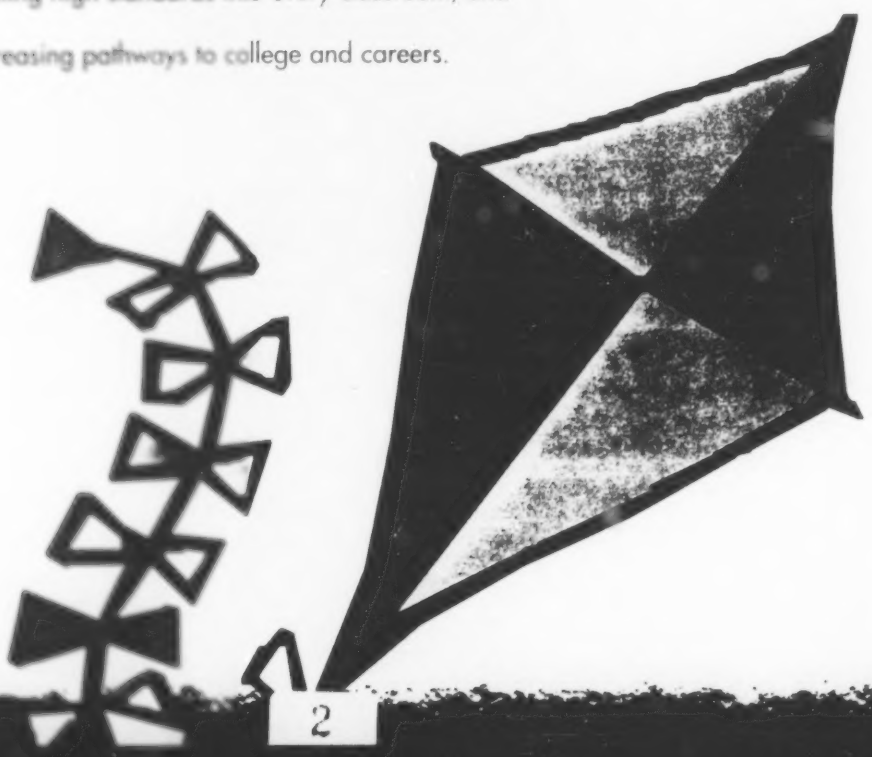
As we approach the 21st century, American students must be prepared for an increasingly global job market. Family, business, and community involvement in education can make a significant difference in preparing our children to succeed and get on the right track.

This pamphlet outlines six priority educational action areas on which you could focus your *America Goes Back to School* event or long-term project:

- Making schools safe and drug free;
- Recruiting and preparing quality teachers;
- Modernizing schools;
- Expanding after-school programs;
- Getting high standards into every classroom; and
- Increasing pathways to college and careers.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PS 028789



Making Schools Safe and Drug Free

The great majority of schools in the United States are safe places. Some schools, however, struggle with crime and violence, which compromise the peaceful learning environment that is so crucial to personal and academic growth. In the past few years, a number of schools have seen outbursts of more severe violence than ever before in our nation's history. Parents, teachers, students, and communities are all concerned about the health of our youth and the safety of our schools, and understand the need to reconnect disengaged students. Research shows that it takes the involvement of the whole community to establish a comprehensive approach to reducing violence and drug and alcohol abuse among youth. School violence is being redefined to indicate that it is not a school problem but a school-family-community problem.

"America's schools are among the safest places to be on a day-to-day basis. Ninety percent of our schools are free of serious violent crime. We have millions of young people who are healthy and happy and want to learn. We need to stop and think hard about what we can do to help our children grow up safely and learn to reject violence."

—U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley

The U.S. Departments of Education and Justice are collaborating on a number of efforts to help principals, school administrators, teachers, community leaders, and parents address safety and violence issues in their schools and communities. Real progress on these issues will take place only through the collaborative efforts of educators, parents, law enforcement agencies, youth groups, civil and religious organizations, mental health professionals, and state and local leaders.

Related facts:

- 90 percent of schools reported NO incidents of serious violent crime in 1996-1997.
- There was no change in the percentage of students reporting any (violent or property) victimization at school (14.5 percent versus 14.6 percent), or the percentage of students reporting property victimization at school (12.2 percent versus 11.6 percent) between 1989 and 1995.
- Crime is more prevalent in city schools: 17 percent of schools located in cities reported at least one serious violent crime, 8 percent of rural schools, and 5 percent of schools located in towns.
- A 1998 National PTA survey found that 75 percent of people favor increased federal funding to prevent violence in schools by hiring school counselors or security officers.

Model programs:

- **Project ACHIEVE**, facilitated by Howard M. Knoff at the School Psychology Program at the University of South Florida in Tampa, helps individual schools with large numbers of special education referrals and schools at-risk for multiple incidents of violence to strategically plan for and address their immediate and long-term student needs. At-risk and underachieving students in pre-K through middle school learn social skills, problem-solving methods, and anger-reduction techniques. Teachers, parents, and school administrators are trained to employ these techniques. Since its inception in August of 1990, the program has generated significant results in decreasing referrals to and placements in special education (by 75 percent), disciplinary referrals to the principal's office (by 28 percent), and suspensions and expulsions. Student academic engagement has increased, as

have the academic achievement scores within the context of highly mobile populations and students in poverty.

For more information, contact: Howard M. Knoff and George M. Batsche, Co-Directors, Institute for School Reform, Integrated Services, and Child Mental Health and Educational Policy, School Psychology Program, College of Education, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL 33620-7750; (813) 974-9498.

- **The Resolving Conflict Creatively Program** (RCCP) is a comprehensive, school-based program in over 110 New York City public schools that emphasizes conflict resolution and intercultural understanding. Through peer mediation, training for teachers, administrators and parents, and the RCCP curriculum of creative conflict resolution and inter-group relations, RCCP strives to achieve a long-term reduction in violence and promote caring and cooperative behavior among children, adolescents and adults both in and out of school. The program also promotes greater student achievement and a reduction in absentee rates for both teachers and students.

  For more information, contact: Linda Lantieri, National Center, 40 Exchange Place, Suite 1111, New York, NY 10005; (212) 509-0022; (212) 509-1095 (fax).

America Goes Back to School Ideas:

(1) Hold a Health Awareness night at school for students and families to learn about drug and alcohol prevention, local mental health resources, and the possibility of receiving free or low-cost insurance for children 18 years of age and under, through the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Call 1-877-Kids-Now for more information about CHIP.

(2) Organize local summits and form a committee of teachers, students, school administrators, mental health professionals, law enforcement officials, and parents to assess the problems your school faces in regard to alcohol, drugs, violence, and disorder, and review what your school is doing to deal with these issues. Come up with recommendations or strategies to change these patterns in your community and school.

Resources:

The U.S. Department of Education has a variety of materials, programs, and information to help schools and communities make their schools safer and more orderly. To request products related to any of these programs, call 1-877-4ED-Pubs. For additional information on these programs, call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit the following Web sites:

- Safe and Drug Free Schools at http://www.ed.gov/OESE/SDFS
- The on-line version of *Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools* at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/earlywrn.html
- *Safe & Smart: Making the After School Hours Work for Kids* at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/SafeandSmart/
- *Strong Families, Strong Schools* at http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/families/strong/

Recruiting and Preparing Quality Teachers

Teaching is the essential profession, the one that makes all other professions possible. Without well-prepared, caring, and committed teachers, our children will not be prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. More than ever before in our history, teaching is the profession that is shaping the nation's future—molding the skills of our future workforce and laying the foundation for good citizenship and full participation in community and civic life.

"Every child needs—and deserves—dedicated, outstanding teachers, who know their subject matter, are effectively trained, and know how to teach to high standards and to make learning come alive for students."

—President Clinton

Because of increasing enrollments and the growing diversity of American classrooms, we face the challenge of hiring over two million well-prepared, qualified, and talented teachers over the next ten years. The U.S. Department of Education's Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant Programs can help communities and states take an important step in recruiting and keeping well-prepared teachers for America's children. Much more still needs to be done, however, in schools, colleges, and the states. It will take local and state initiatives as well as nationwide efforts to ensure that America's children receive high-quality teaching.

Related facts:

- 2.2 million teachers will need to be hired in the next decade to serve the growing enrollment of students and to fill a record number of vacancies as the first "baby boomers" begin to retire.
- Only 1 in 5 teachers reports feeling "very well prepared" to work in a modern classroom.
- Only 19 percent of teachers said another teacher had formally mentored them, while 70 percent of teachers who reported that they had been mentored at least once a week said it helped their teaching "a lot."
- In 1997, only 4 in 10 teachers reported that they had had formal training in the Internet.
- Only 13 percent of teachers in public schools are from minority groups, while more than 32 percent of the students in K-12 schools are from such minority groups.

Model programs:

- Through the **South Carolina Center for Teacher Recruitment Teacher Cadet Program**, teachers at 148 high schools volunteer to conduct a year-long course open to students with a high grade-point average and an interest in teaching. This is not a typical high school offering—it is a mixture of solid content (history of education, principles of learning, child development, current issues in education) and hands-on opportunities to observe, construct lessons plans, tutor younger students, and practice teaching. A 600-page handbook written and constantly modified by teachers serves as the core curriculum for all of the high school classes. It contains suggestions for course content as well as engaging assignments, such as designing an ideal early childhood environment or presenting evidence at a school board meeting.

  Many of the partner higher education institutions provide support to the Teacher Cadet sites, and in some cases, college-credit for the high school course. Also, several Teachers-in-Residence receive fellowships each year to supervise the program from the center and visit the participating high schools. Fifteen other states are now replicating South Carolina's Teacher Cadet Program.

For more information, contact South Carolina Center for Teacher Recruitment, Ward House, Winthrop University Station, Rock Hill, SC 29733; (803) 323-4032 or 1-800-476-2387.

- At Adlai E. Stevenson High School, a New American High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois, a professional development school called the University of Stevenson (in partnership with Barat College) gives teachers college credit for action research projects and trains faculty to serve as in-house staff developers. Teachers work together in course-specific curriculum teams that are empowered to make every significant instructional decision. They also have a formal mentoring program for brand new teachers to boost retention.

  Stevenson's graduates scored higher than the state average in all subject areas and in 1997, 90 percent of graduates exceeded the Illinois math and science course requirements. In addition, Stevenson's Mathematics Department was named one of the top twelve in the nation by the National Center for Research in Mathematical Science Education.

  For more information, contact Adlai E. Stevenson High School, One Stevenson Drive, Lincolnshire, IL 60069; (847) 634-4000.

America Goes Back to School Idea:

Honor your teachers with an *America Goes Back to School* Appreciation Dinner, develop ways to support them throughout the year, and enlist them to recruit the next generation of new teachers. For a long-term effort, work with a local business to start a teacher-training program focusing on technology in the classroom.

Resources:

The U.S. Department of Education has a variety of materials, programs, and information to help support, recruit, and prepare quality teachers for our nation's schools. To request products related to any of these programs, call 1-877-4ED-Pubs. For additional information on these programs, call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit the following Web sites:

- The U.S. Department of Education's Teachers Web site at http://www.ed.gov/inits/teachers/teach.html
- *Promising Practices: New Ways to Improve Teacher Quality* at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/PromPractice/

Modernizing Schools

Our nation's schools are facing crucial challenges these days: a rapidly growing student population in already overcrowded schools, and in many cases, deteriorating facilities in urgent need of replacement or major repairs. Many existing schools are too large and impersonal, inaccessible to students with disabilities, and not conducive to safety and discipline. We need to address these problems by building new, state-of-the-art schools for the 21st century and modernizing existing schools. Over the next ten years, thousands of schools will need to be built, and even more will need to be renovated. That's why President Clinton and Vice President Gore have proposed $25 billion of interest-free bonds to help modernize up to 6,000 schools. It is also the reason that some states and school districts are launching major school construction efforts.

"The number of American schools that are physically worn out is nothing less than a national embarrassment. Other areas cannot build schools fast enough to keep pace with growth. I am fascinated to see how an alternative physical structure can be used to teach principles of geometry or physics. The Clinton administration wants to explore new ways in which to engage the American people in the process of designing schools that can be vital centers of the community."

—U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley

New and renovated schools will need to last for many years, and will leave a lasting legacy that will influence the future in education. The need does not lie solely in the physical building, however. The demand to build and modernize is being driven by the need to reflect the many improvements in curriculum and teaching practices, and new advances in technology that are fundamentally changing American education. The need to fully engage parents, students, teachers, and other community members in the planning and design process is an equally important consideration in creating schools that are true centers of communities.

Related facts:

- The General Accounting Office (GAO) estimates that $112 billion is needed to bring the nation's schools into good overall condition (not including new schools and classrooms).
- About 60 percent of all schools (including some schools in generally adequate condition) report needing to replace or extensively repair at least one major building feature.
- Elementary and secondary school enrollments will swell from 52.7 million in 1998 to 54.3 million in 2008. States and localities will need to build thousands of new schools to accommodate the growth by millions of students in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as well as incoming students over the next decade.
- Students in school buildings that were in poor condition performed at 6 percent below the achievement level of students in schools that were in fair condition, and 11 percent below students in schools in excellent condition.
- According to a 1998 National PTA survey, 82 percent of people favor increased federal funding for reparation and modernization of school buildings.

Model programs:

- The Discovery Middle School in Vancouver, Washington, was developed through the extensive involvement of parents, students, educators, architects, business partners, and other community members. Integrating unique educational spaces, the school features "Academic Villages," which consist of

10 high-tech classrooms and are organized as schools-within-the-school with teams of students and teachers. Another design feature is called the "Tool Box"—an area divided into five zones of integrated instruction, including research with reference materials, wet/dry lab, art design, technology education, and fabrication. Outside access is available at the school for environmental studies.

The Community Center, a special room near the school's main entrance, reaffirms Discovery Middle School's place within the Vancouver community. The Community Center is dedicated for use by community organizations, school partners, and social service support.

For more information, contact: Discovery Middle School, 800 East 40th Street, Vancouver, WA; (360) 696-7101; (360) 737-4238 (fax).

- Gaylord High School in Gaylord, Michigan, serves as a secondary education institution as well as a community center. Built with the community in mind, the school houses senior activities, day-care, and performing arts programs, allowing students to interact with other members of their community. School officials believe the bond referendum to build the high school would have never passed without the inclusion of community activities. Now the entire community has a vested interest in the school. For example, the special auditorium committee evolved out of a need for a theater for school/community concerts, recitals, and other functions.

  Classrooms were also designed to accommodate community use. Anticipating that some teachers would feel they had lost the privacy of their classrooms, school administrators worked with the design team to create departmental offices that would provide private space for faculty members. The high school also houses a full cadre of higher education programs. This range of activities at Gaylord has produced more volunteerism, more funding, and more general interest in the school.

  Contact: Gaylord High School, 90 Livingston Blvd., Gaylord, MI 49735; (517) 731-0960; (517) 731-2585 (fax).

America Goes Back to School Idea:

Form a group of parents, educators, business and civic leaders, and community members to take a bus tour to evaluate the community's school buildings in relation to the needs of the student population and community at large. Solicit suggestions, and formulate a plan to improve and modernize your facilities to make schools the centers of learning for the whole community.

Resources:

The U.S. Department of Education provides even more information on modernizing schools for the 21st century. To request products related to any of these programs, call 1-877-4ED-Pubs. For additional information on these programs, call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit the following Web sites:

- The U.S. Department of Education's School Modernization Web site at http://www.ed.gov/inits/construction
- The National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities at http://www.edfacilities.org

Expanding After-School Programs

Keeping schools open longer—before and after school, and during the summer and weekends—can turn schools into community learning centers, providing students, parents, and the community with access to valuable educational, cultural, and recreational resources in a safe, supervised, and drug-free environment. Recent research has also shown that quality after-school and summer programs can improve reading and math, academic achievement, and discipline of children and youth; and indicates that these types of programs reduce crime, delinquency, and victimization of children and youth. According to a recent survey, parents are also in favor of after-school enrichment programs that would provide their children with computer classes, art and music courses, tutoring, and community service projects. That's why President Clinton and Vice President Gore have requested $600 million, a $400 million increase, for the U.S. Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers for the 2000-2001 school year.

"The period of time between the school bell and the factory whistle is a most vulnerable time for children. These are hours when children are more likely to engage in at-risk behavior and are more vulnerable to the dangers that still exist in too many neighborhoods and communities."

—*Vice President Gore*

Through expanding school-community partnerships, the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program and other state and local initiatives can help communities develop or establish programs that provide after-school care in public school buildings using existing resources, such as computers, libraries, art and music rooms, gymnasiums, and sports equipment.

Related facts:

- At least 28 million school-age children have parents in the work force and require after-school care. Experts estimate that at least 5 million school-age children spend time as latch-key kids without adult supervision during a typical week.
- About 35 percent of 12 year-olds are regularly left by themselves while their parents are at work.
- According to FBI statistics, most juvenile (ages 12-17) crime takes place between the hours of 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.
- More than 70 percent of parents want their children to attend an after-school program —while 79 percent indicated they would like a free program, almost as many, 74 percent, would pay for a program. There was little to no difference in the demographics of the parents who responded differently.
- Only 31 percent of elementary school parents and 39 percent of middle school parents reported that their children actually attend an after-school program.
- According to a recent national PTA survey, 65 percent of people would support increased federal funding for after-school programs.

Model programs:

- **KLICK! (Kids Learning in Computer Klubhouses)**, a consortium of nine urban and rural Michigan school districts with support from the College of Education at Michigan State University (MSU), has established a virtual network of ten middle school computer clubhouses as part of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program. The ten extracurricular clubhouses enable at-risk students to engage in authentic learning opportunities through the use of computers and computer-related technology. Students create Web pages, write newsletter articles, communicate electronically with other students across

Michigan, and are learning to use many other forms of technology. Most importantly, the clubhouses provide safe environments that break down the barriers of isolation imposed by poverty, distance, and age.

The clubhouses allow middle school students to become a helpful technology resource to all facets of their communities, including senior citizens, service organizations, and others in need of their services. Each school site is staffed with an on-site coordinator and equipped with a variety of technology resources. MSU provides ongoing training and support for the school coordinators.

For more information, visit their Web site at http://www.klick.org

- **Virtual Y**, in New York City, is an extended school service designed to reach 10,000 public school children in 100 public school buildings across the city. Each day, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., 100 second, third and fourth graders at each site participate in the Y's traditional curriculum to build strong values, enhance education, improve academic performance, and promote healthy lifestyles. Reading is the "golden thread" woven throughout the curriculum to work toward meeting President Clinton's challenge that all children be able to read well by the end of third grade. Virtual Y maximizes resources by using a mixture of full- and part-time professionals and volunteers, including college work-study students, AmeriCorps volunteers, and high school students involved in service learning. Families, schools, and the community work together to make the Virtual Y program a reality.

For more information, contact: Christian DiPalermo, (212) 630-1543.

- **Save the Children Out-of-School Time Rural Initiative** provides program dollars, training, technical assistance, and ongoing evaluation to rural sites across the country, such as the El Rito Family Learning Center in New Mexico, and in the Zuni School District in Zuni, New Mexico. These programs are working to provide children with constructive activities, safe places, and supervision from caring adults. As a model literacy effort, the Zuni project highlights many programs geared towards reading. The El Rito Center targets children for after-school and summer programs, and offers them everything from computer lab instruction to fine arts.

For more information, contact: Renee Paisano, (505) 268-5364; (505) 268-5436 (fax)

America Goes Back to School Idea:

Create a safe learning environment for children by starting or expanding an after-school enrichment program. Involve teachers, parent volunteers, college students, and senior citizens as tutors and program directors. Take advantage of school resources such as music rooms, libraries, computer labs, and gyms, and link up with community organizations and cultural and youth groups to create a structured and varied learning environment.

Resources:

The U.S. Department of Education has a variety of materials, programs, and information about high quality after-school programs. To request products related to any of these programs, call 1-877-4ED-Pubs. For additional information on these programs, call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit the following Web sites:

- C.S. Mott Foundation at http://www.mott.org
- The National Institute for Out of School Time at http://www.wellesley.edu/WCW/CRW/SAC
- *Safe and Smart: Making the After-School Hours Work for Kids and Keeping Schools Open as Community Learning Centers* at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/SafeandSmart/

Getting High Standards Into Every Classroom

Learning to read well and independently by the end of the third grade is essential to continue learning. That is why President Clinton and Vice President Gore have proposed to reduce class size to help students get the personal attention they need in order to read well, and succeed in other subjects, too. Mastering challenging mathematics—including the foundations of algebra and geometry—by the end of eighth grade is crucial for opening the doors to high school courses that will prepare students for college and promising careers. To help get high standards into America's classrooms, Congress is considering the Education Excellence for All Act, which builds on the success of the 1994 Goals 2000: Educate America Act.

"We have put a real emphasis on the early years of schooling because research and common sense tell you that if a young person can "master the basics" early, they get off to a much better start in their education. We want to improve academic achievement for all students, with a special emphasis on closing the gap upward between poor and minority students, and other students."

—U.S. Secretary of Education
Richard W. Riley

In today's economy, almost every high school student should be taking all the core courses for college, and planning to take Advanced Placement and/or tech-prep courses their junior and senior years in high school. To succeed in the 21st century, high school students should learn about careers and pathways to college, and they should take four years of math, science, and English, three to four years of a second language, as well as courses in the arts, geography, history, and computer science.

Related facts:

- Mastering the fundamentals of algebra by the end of eighth grade, students will be prepared for the challenging math and science courses in high school that are the gateway to college and promising careers.
- According to the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS:88), 83 percent of students who took algebra and geometry went on to college within two years of their scheduled high school graduation. Only 36 percent of students who did not take algebra and geometry courses went to college.
- While fourth graders scored above the international average in math and science, eighth graders scored below the average in math, and only slightly above the international average in science. Twelfth-grade performance ranks third from the bottom.
- New academic standards are being put in place in 48 states, and two states have raised standards at the local level. (The next challenge is to get high standards into every classroom.)
- According to the 1998 results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 68 percent of fourth graders in high-poverty schools are not able to read at even the "basic" level. These children are already far behind their more fortunate peers. A much smaller percentage of children in low-poverty schools—23 percent—are not able to read at the basic level.

Model programs:

- The Gateway Institute of Technology, a magnet school and a New American High

School in St. Louis, Missouri, integrates a strong academic curriculum emphasizing mathematics and science with career preparation in highly technical fields.

Gateway is organized into clusters to facilitate the achievement of academic and technical skills. All students, regardless of which cluster they belong to, are required to take many math and science courses, including algebra, geometry, advanced algebra with college algebra, and trigonometry with analytic geometry, in addition to biology, chemistry, and physics. Students may also take dual-enrollment courses for college credit such as Advanced Biology, Advanced English, Ethics in Science and Technology, Aviation, and Industrial Chemistry in addition to Advanced Placement courses in computer science, biology, chemistry, physics, and calculus.

All students complete projects that integrate other subject areas or real-life applications into the subject area of each particular course. For example, in a recent statistics class, students completed a project for the St. Louis Rams where they studied scouting and developed a math model to predict whom the team would draft.

For more information, please contact: Susan Tieber, Principal, Gateway Institute of Technology at (314) 776-3300.

- Arvida Middle School, in Miami, Florida, was recognized as a 1997-98 Blue Ribbon School for its high academic standards. Through educational reform, the school has demonstrated its commitment to excellence by addressing the unique learning needs of all its students. Through subject-area gifted classes, an extensive foreign language program, the implementation of national science standards through an integrated science program and high school credit science classes, and advanced math and science studies, Arvida promotes a rigorous and challenging curriculum. The middle school also offers flexible schedules to allow students the opportunity to take extra elective courses before school, or receive tutoring services during the after-school hours. At-risk intervention programs are in place to assist students who are not working up to their potential.

  Part of Arvida Middle School's success is related to its impressive community partnerships. Faculty, students, parents, and community members have established a viable coalition that promotes continuous improvement. Partnerships with fifteen community businesses and associations have contributed to an ongoing incentive program that defrays the cost of awards, certificates, field trips, and funding assistance for special projects.

  Contact: Arvida Middle School, 10900 Southwest 127 Avenue, Miami, FL 33186; (305) 385-7144

America Goes Back to School Idea:

Partner with local business leaders, teachers, college students, parents, and community members to evaluate the performance levels of students in your schools. Compare your school to those across your state, and to national standards. Partner with business leaders, teachers, and college students to launch a year-long effort to make sure every student in your community can read well and independently by the end of the third grade, that students are taking algebra by grade eight, and that almost every high school student is taking all the core courses to prepare for college or a career.

Resources:

The U.S. Department of Education offers a number of publications and programs to help get high standards into the classroom. To request products related to any of these programs, call 1-877-4ED-Pubs. For additional information on these programs, call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit the following Web site:

- The U.S. Department of Education's list of initiatives at http://www.ed.gov/inits

Increasing Pathways To College and Careers

Today, more than ever before, higher education is the fault line between those who will prosper in the new economy and those who will not. To prepare our children for the world of personal and professional choices in the 21st century, we must open the doors of college to all Americans and make two years of college as universal as high school is today. Yet many students never receive a college education, some because they lack the preparation for college and others because they lack the financial resources. President Clinton and Vice President Gore are fighting to make higher education affordable and accessible to all Americans by expanding need-based scholarships, tax credits, and student loans, and by building awareness across the nation that everyone can go to college if they work hard and make the grade. Community involvement is crucial to making these programs worthwhile. It's only with the help of school, college, and community and business efforts that all students can get on the pathway to college and promising careers.

"If you know a child from a poor family, tell her not to give up—she can go on to college. If you know a young couple struggling with bills, worried they won't be able to send their children to college, tell them not to give up—their children can go on to college. If you know somebody who's caught in a dead-end job and afraid he can't afford the classes necessary to get better jobs for the rest of his life, tell him not to give up—he can go on to college. Because of the things that have been done, we can make college as universal in the 21st century as high school is today. And, my friends, that will change the face and future of America."

—President Clinton

Related facts:

- 70 percent of parents say they would like more information about which courses their child should take to be ready for college; 89 percent of parents want more information about how to pay for college, including the use of tax credits.
- Over the next 10 years, 8 out of the 10 fastest growing jobs will require college education or long-term training.
- In 1995, 83 percent of high school graduates from high-income families, aged 18-24, were enrolled in college the October following high school; 56 percent from middle-income families, and only 34 percent from low-income families were enrolled at that time.
- In the next decade, 75 percent of the current workforce will need significant retraining.
- A student who receives a bachelor's or a higher degree will earn nearly $1 million more, in the course of a lifetime, than one who does not graduate from high school.
- The lifetime difference in earnings between a student who does not graduate from high school and one who does is over $200,000.

Model programs:

- Project GRAD (Graduation Really Achieves Dreams), in Houston, Texas, is a school-community partnership, established in 1993, to improve the instructional quality and school environment for at-risk children

in Houston's inner city schools. Working with 24 schools in Houston and over 17,000 Hispanic and African American students, Project GRAD promotes high standards in math, reading and language arts, and uses comprehensive approaches—including tutoring, mentoring, counseling, and the arts—to improve the entire system so a child gets a solid, challenging education from kindergarten through high school.

Project GRAD also promises all ninth-grade students a $1,000 per year college scholarship if they meet basic academic criteria. This incentive encourages parents and teachers to discuss college as a real objective for students, and offers students a reason to perform well academically.

Project GRAD has been highly successful. The rates of high school graduation and college enrollment have quadrupled in these Houston schools in the past three years, and student test scores have improved dramatically. The community now embraces college attendance as the rule, not the exception.

For more information, contact Sharon Jacobson, Executive Director, Project GRAD at (713) 757-5973; (713) 757-3144 (fax).

- Walhalla High School is an 850-student New American High School located in South Carolina near the Blue Ridge Mountains. With the help of the South Carolina Education Department, the Southern Regional Education Board and the Partnership for Academic and Career Education (a tech-prep consortium), Walhalla High initiated whole school reform and organized career clusters along a Tech Prep and College Prep continuum. Students can choose between the two programs or participate in both. The Tech Prep focus prepares students for entry into technical degree programs in college or for immediate entry into a chosen career. If a student is interested in a technical engineering field requiring a 4-year college degree, then he or she will take both College Prep classes and Tech Prep classes. Most importantly, students in Tech-Prep courses are not getting a lesser education—Honors, Tech Prep, and College Prep classes all have the same GPA value.

  An important component of this program is experience in the workplace. According to Walhalla's career specialist Rick Murphy, students often "have appropriate part-time jobs, enroll in formal, articulated apprenticeship programs, or get involved in a co-op, which is arranged and structured to fit the curriculum."

  Walhalla High School's reform has been extremely successful. The most telling evidence of this is the fact that 100 percent of Walhalla students say they are going to continue their education.

  For further information, please contact: John Hostetler, Principal, Walhalla High School, 151 Razorback Lane, Walhalla, SC 29691; (864) 638-4582; (864) 638-4055 (fax).

America Goes Back to School Idea:

Start a "Think College Early" program at local middle schools to help students and their families prepare early for college. Provide information to students and parents on course requirements, necessary admission tests, financial planning and assistance, and the benefits of pursuing higher education.

Resources:

The U.S. Department of Education distributes several publications to help students and their families prepare for college and promising careers. To request products related to any of these programs, call 1-877-4ED-Pubs. For additional information on these programs, call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit the following Web sites:

- GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) at http://www.ed.gov/gearup
- Think College Early at http://www.ed.gov/thinkcollege/early/tce_home.htm

A New Millennium: Reflecting on Educational Change and Opportunity

The turn of a millennium is an extraordinary event. It is a time to look back at the past, and forward to the future. Listed below are some of the most influential educational events of the past two centuries. These events changed the course of education in our country, and their effects are still felt today. Also below are a number of recent educational policies that will undoubtedly change the face of education in the coming millennium. Use this unique time, and this list of historical and current events, to reflect on your community—its treasures, its needs, and its schools. Discuss how America has become the society it is at the close of the 20th century, and what we must do to ensure equal access to excellent education in the 21st century. Organize your America Goes Back to School partnership around examining the educational history of your community, evaluating current performance standards, and planning for the future of education.

Historical Events That Still Affect Us Today

Land Grant Colleges, 1862
In 1862, Congress passed the Land Grant College Act (also known as the First Morrill Act) to provide funding for institutions of higher learning in each state. For every Congressional representative within a state, the federal government provided 30,000 acres of land to be sold and used as an endowment for at least one college offering training in agriculture, home economics, mechanical studies, and other professional trades. Some of the early land-grant institutions include Iowa State University, Kansas State, Rutgers, and the Universities of Vermont, Minnesota, Missouri, Kentucky, and Wisconsin. In 1890, the Second Morrill Act was passed to include historically black universities in the land-grant system. At this time, the southern states that did not already have a black college established one. Since their inception, Land Grant colleges have broadened the opportunities for higher education to people across the United States.

GI Bill of Rights, 1944
Officially known as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, the GI Bill was signed by President Roosevelt to broaden the opportunities of returning World War II veterans. In addition to helping purchase homes and businesses, and cover the cost of hospitalizations, the bill provided tuition, living expenses, books, and supplies to veterans to continue their education in school or college. Within 7 years, nearly 8 million veterans received educational benefits. The GI Bill opened the doors of higher education to an older and more diverse population than this country had ever seen. In the coming century, through the current GI Bill, together with need-based scholarships, financial aid, new tax credits, work-study, and GEAR UP, we can make college as universal as high school is today.

For more information about financial aid, call 1-800-4FED-AID, or visit the College Is Possible Web site at http://www.CollegeIsPossible.org.

Brown v. Board of Education, 1954
In the 1954 case Brown v. Board of Education, the Supreme Court deemed the "separate but equal" approach to education unconstitutional, and school districts were ordered to run a single school system for all students, regardless of color. With the supervision of the federal government in many cases, states desegregated the schools, and African American children joined their peers in classrooms across America.

Special Education, 1975
The first federal law that addressed the issue of special education was passed in 1958 under the Education of Mentally Retarded Children Act. This provided training funds for teachers to learn to work with children considered mentally retarded. It was not until 1975, however, that the Education for All Handicapped Children Act was passed, ensuring a free, appropriate education for students with disabilities, and acknowledging that all children should have access to school.

The act has been revised and amended several times since 1975, with the latest revision in 1997, and is now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

For more information on these latest regulations, visit the IDEA Web site at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/IDEA.

Information taken from Education Week on the Web (Jan 27, 1999 edition)

Current Events That Will Shape Our Future

HOPE Scholarship and Lifetime Learning Credits

On August 5, 1997, President Clinton signed the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997, which provides for the HOPE Scholarship and the Lifetime Learning Credits, the largest investment in higher education since the GI Bill. Along with the Pell Grant, Work-Study, and other forms of financial aid, the HOPE Scholarship is designed to make the first two years of college universally available to American students. Taxpayers will be eligible for a tax credit equal to 100 percent of the first $1,000 of tuition and fees, and 50 percent of the second $1,000. The credit can be claimed in two taxable years, but not beyond the year when the student completes the first two years of college.

The Lifetime Learning Credit is for those beyond the first two years of college, as well as working adults taking classes part-time to improve or upgrade their job skills. Available on a per-taxpayer (family) basis, a 20 percent tax credit is provided for the first $5,000 of tuition and fees through 2002, and for the first $10,000 thereafter. Together, the HOPE Scholarship and the Lifetime Learning Credits will open the doors of college to a new generation.

For more information, visit http://www.ed.gov/inits/HOPE.

E-Rate: Closing the "Digital Divide"

By July 1999, the first round of education discounts for Internet connection ("E-Rate"), totalling $1.3 billion, will be made available to schools and libraries. These discounts, as Vice President Gore has said, "will help ensure that all of our children—whether rich or poor, from inner cities or isolated rural communities—have the same access to the vast resources of the Internet."

In October 1998, prior to launching the E-Rate, 51 percent of classrooms were linked to the Internet. The goal, according to Vice President Gore, is to link all of our nation's classrooms by the end of the year 2000. This is an enormous step in closing the "digital divide" that exists among our communities, and creating full and fair opportunities for all students. Our children will be better prepared to compete for the high-tech, high-wage jobs of our future.

For further details on the E-Rate, visit http://www.ed.gov/Technology/eratemenu.html or http://www.slcfund.org.

The Arts Education Partnership

The enactment of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994, which helped raise education standards across America, also recognized the arts as a core area of study in American education in which all children should have preparation. In response to this challenge, the Arts Education Partnership was formed in 1995 through a cooperative agreement between the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Department of Education. A coalition of education, arts, business and funding organizations, the Arts Education Partnership is committed to improving the quality of American schools by promoting the arts as a way to help all students gain academic and personal success.

Over 140 national organizations have joined the Arts Education Partnership to affirm the arts as fundamental to quality education, and to help identify ways that the arts can be an asset in school reform efforts. The Arts Education Partnership is managed by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

For more information, call (202) 326-8693 or visit http://aep-arts.org.

America Reads and America Counts Work-Study Waivers

On July 1, 1997, the U.S. Department of Education issued a regulation known as the America Reads Waiver to encourage federal work-study students to serve as reading tutors. Generally the higher education institution in which the work-study students are enrolled pays a quarter of the students' wages while the Federal Work-Study program pays the balance. Under this new plan, the federal government

pays 100 percent of the wages of work-study students who serve as reading tutors or mentors to preschool and elementary school children, or in family literacy programs. Starting July 1, 1999, the federal government will cover the work-study wages of mathematics tutors as well, through the America Counts Waiver.

Both the America Reads and America Counts Waivers work toward increasing community and college involvement in education. We still have a long way to go. To help children achieve in the years to come, families, volunteers, business leaders, and community members should all take on a larger role in children's education.

For more information on work-study programs, visit the Web site at http://www.ed.gov/inits/Math/acc/fws-fact.html.

A Unique Opportunity: The Mars Millennium Project

The Mars Millennium Project: An Arts, Science, and Technology Initiative takes advantage of students' excitement about space exploration to engage them in problem solving in science, math, the arts, and other core subjects. Beginning with the 1999-2000 school year, this nationwide project invites teams of students to design a community for 100 people on the planet Mars for the Year 2030. Working with teachers, community leaders, families, and professionals in various fields, students from first grade through high school will concentrate on aspects of the arts, sciences, math, and humanities in creating their own communities. The Mars Millennium Project, according to Secretary of Education Richard Riley, "offers an exciting opportunity for our teachers and students to link a variety of learning disciplines and multi-step problem solving, and to harness students' creative energy." Communities, museums, libraries, and schools are encouraged to showcase the student projects in the spring and summer of the year 2000. Participation guides for schools and community organizations will be available in June 1999.

For more information on the Mars Millennium Project: An Arts, Science, and Technology Initiative, call (301) 274-8787 x150, or visit their Web site at http://www.mars2030.net.

AMERICA READS BACK TO SCHOOL

PARTNERSHIP for Family Involvement in Education

U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20202-8173